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ABSTRACT

Although Mexican-American and Black-American movements in the United States have typically been compared, significant differences between the two minorities--especially in cultural norms and expectations--make comparisons inaccurate and misleading. This paper explores the differences between the Black-American and Mexican-American minorities, focusing on the analysis of intercultural communication behavior as it is affected by cultural variables, on cultural assimilation and cultural pluralism, and on economic and political comparative standards. Differences in the following cultural variables are discussed: language, cultural history, multiculturalism, educational opportunities, Chicanismo and people with "soul," family orientation, participation in the church, belief in the supernatural, diet, dress habits, sports preferences, respect for the elderly, concept of community, drug use, national identity, musical tastes, celebrations, and possessions. (JM)

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BLACK AMERICAN AND MEXICAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS

by Willard A. Underwood,
Ralph E. Ferguson
and
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In recent years all Americans have been encouraged to help resolve the social, political, economic and educational problems which confront most ethnic minorities in the United States. With the evolution and sophistication of Black American protest strategies in seeking social changes, other minority groups have been urged to adopt similar techniques to communicate their own needs and interests. Typically, references to spokesmen and issues of the Mexican-American movement for social and economic equality refer to prior experiences of the Black American mass social movement. Through examining mass social movements, and both cultures, it becomes obvious that exact comparisons are misleading—numerous similarities in economic, social and political suppression and exploitation have been experienced by both ethnic minorities; but significant differences also exist, especially in cultural norms and expectations, which make such direct comparisons inaccurate and misleading.

This paper is an examination of the area in which differences exist between the Black American and Mexican-American ethnic minorities: differences which necessitate caution and reconsideration before one may recommend identical techniques to achieve similar objectives in the social, economic, political and educational realms. These differences in cultural norms and expectations are especially significant when compared with the dominant, or "Anglo"[1] culture.

Identifying a "culture"

A workable definition of "culture" is "that complex of ideas, values, attitudes, and other meaningful symbols created by man to shape human behavior, and the artifacts of that culture as they are transmitted from one generation to another."[2] The

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significance of understanding the nature of a cultural group is explained by Cuzzort, who notes that, "an understanding of culture provides meaningful clues to why certain decision processes and consumption acts are preferred over others. In the most fundamental sense, man's ways of perceiving his world are molded by his cultural background."[3] Norman Greenberg adds that "there appears to be unanimous acceptance of the belief that individual differences among men are dramatically reduced through their willing subjection to the subtle controls of cultural expectations."[4] Walter Goldschmidt carries the importance of cultural expectations further, observing that:

> As we examine human behavior we find that all persons not only live in social systems, which is to say they are drawn together, but all people also act in such ways as to attain the approval of their fellow man. In this search for approval, they willingly and often eagerly undergo physical torture, mental harassment, or death—and even hard work. Culture, as a learned pattern of actions, beliefs, and organized relations among its members, probably has its base in the animal attributes of man.[5]

In attempting to describe the perameters of a given "culture," difficulties are often developed: is there truly a "general American" or "Anglo" culture? or is the "Anglo" culture really a collection of several "sub-cultures"? Do we distinguish cultures according to one criterion when discussing ethnic origin, or language groupings, and by another criterion when analyzing political or social cultures? Porter suggests a valuable technique for effective intercultural studies:

> It is my contention that intercultural communication can best be understood as cultural variance in the perception of social objects and events. The barriers to communication caused by this perceptual variance can best be lowered by a knowledge and understanding of cultural factors that are subject to variance, coupled with an honest and sincere desire to communicate successfully across cultural boundaries.[6]

Leyba embellishes this concept noting that to be functional, another characteristic of a culture is that there must be:

> persons in sufficient numbers to make the provision of these goods and services and especially the sharing of language, social customs and ethics a constant reality. Where these components exist in a marginal fashion, the majority culture will, over time, transform the minority culture which is too diffuse to sustain itself. Group cohesion [becomes] sustenance of the culture.[7]

Leyba concludes that "cultural preservation is in direct proportion to the presence of an environment including the basic components of the culture sufficient to maintain

that culture";[8] Aragon cites these qualities or cultural variables as: (a) a common language; (b) a common diet; (c) similar costuming; (d) common social patterns; and (e) ethics (common values and beliefs).[9]

Within the discipline of intercultural communication, Richard Porter lists eight cultural variables: (1) attitudes; (2) patterns of thought; (3) social organization; (4) roles and role prescriptions; (5) language; (6) use and organization of space; (7) time conceptualization; and (8) non-verbal expression.[10] The difficulty most often cited in analyzing intercultural communication behavior is the physical impossibility of any individual becoming knowledgeable of all cultures or all cultural variables. Instead, Samuel Becker suggests that more of our research needs to be made relevant to our society at large:

> We must . . . resolve the problem of identifying the variables in intercultural communication situations which are most likely to be the important--or even relevant--variables. One cannot collect all information on all cultures. Nor is it always profitable to collect data on the most exotic or unique aspects of a culture. . . . A good starting place may be the set of variables which have proved fruitful in the study of communication within our culture.[11]

That there is a definite need for intercultural communication studies is emphasized by William Howell, who recognizes that understanding others from cultures other than our own may require re-definition of one's perceptual fields:

> Our inability to exchange ideas with contrasting ethnic groups at home and with representatives of foreign cultures is recognized as the cause of catastrophic misunderstandings. The need to improve intercultural speech-communication calls for substantial changes in all systems of speech education, with urgency.[12]

The biggest single difficulty in accurately establishing the cultural variables and cultural norms of a group different from one's own is the phenomenon of <u>ethnocentrism</u>--the tendency to evaluate other cultures in comparison with one's own culture;[13] if one stops at the "starting point" recommended by Becker, that particular researcher may well create misunderstandings, misinterpretations and mistrust of other cultures. Frequently, individuals assume that "if his culture is different from mine, it must also be inferior to mine." In the process of becoming <u>aware</u> of another culture, it is indeed difficult to avoid engaging in ethnocentrism,

since the phenomenon of ethnocentrism is an integral part of most cultures.

Marjorie Parker notes that all of us, to some degree, are products of ethnocentrism:

> Each says of himself and his family, consciously or unconsciously, we are normal, we are the standards, others are deviations, other individuals are good or bad, fortunate or unfortunate. . . . Sometimes a person who is described as dark or fair, cultured or crude, pleasant or obnoxious, would not even be recognized from his description unless the listener knows the describer and understands that the descriptive judgment, like beauty, is "in the eyes of the beholder."[14]

Beal adds that:

> In the process of studying any cultural system we find ourselves moving out of the neat and ordered world of our own cultural system, through a confusing and frightening reality and into the safe harbor of the neat and ordered world of another cultural system. Disease and misfortune are explained; good and bad people are described and ticketed; everything is arranged and in order. Only then does man dare to look upon reality and say, "It is just as we said it was."[15]

The damage done by ethnocentric attitudes and the resultant behavior in intercultural settings were noted in a doctoral dissertation by Horace Ulibarri, as summarized by Greenberg. Conducting a massive study of Anglo teacher attitudes in Southwestern schools which have large numbers of Indian and Mexican-American children, Ulibarri discovered that most teachers:

> lacked sensitivity to differences in socio-cultural conditions and orientations among the three ethnic groups. The teachers were unaware of the children's varying abilities in the use of the textbooks prepared for their grade level, although they were strongly aware of differences in English proficiency. They clearly recognized differences in general home environment of the three groups, but failed to differentiate specifics in life space and their implications for education. The teachers lacked sensitivity to motivational patterns of and motivational structures applicable to Indian and Spanish-American children. They showed little comprehension of differences among the groups in relating school-taught concepts of citizenship to out-of-school life, and thought that all groups were interacting quite well. Finally, the teachers did not know how to meet the psychological needs of children from different cultural backgrounds.[16]

Greenberg adds that from his own research of administrative problems in integrating Navajo students into public schools, Ulibarri's conclusions are re-affirmed:

> Administrators and teachers were genuinely concerned about their students' problems but could not project themselves into the frame of reference of children from other cultures or socio-economic levels. They realized the importance of individual differences and inter-group problems, but they did not recognize intra-group differences or their possible effect on inter-group relations.[17]

Language differences impose restrictions and determine directions for meanings which people discover in their own experiences. Through language, people categorize and label things in their perceptual fields; moreover, language is used to determine

and define the expressions of a people's cultural heritage. If a similar stimuli enters the perceptual field of two persons from different cultures, the probable result is that two different linguistic explanations and interpretations will result. Edward Sapir explains this situation when he states that:

> Language . . . is a self contained, creative symbolic organization, which not only refers to experience but actually defines experience for us by reason of its formal completeness and because of our unconscious projection of its implicit expectations into the field of experience.[18]

Cultural assimilation and cultural pluralism essentially exist in most politically-defined cultures. Cultural assimilation suggests that large segments of the population share a common structural core and its underlying basic value systems; cultural pluralism suggests that major groups or sub-cultures also retain a strong sense of group identity which means embracing some cultural values which may be counter the mainstream culture.[19] Thus a Black American or a Mexican-American may function well in the "Anglo" culture and yet retain cultural values of the "Black American" or "Mexican-American" sub-culture. In actuality, however, Greenberg suggests that "cultural pluralism as a way of life in America seems to be a verbalized ideal rather than an achievable reality."[20] Leyba explains this idea more clearly, noting that "even where large concentrations of persons of the same cultural group exist, the larger culture with its almost exclusive control of media and institutions makes deep inroads into the psychosocial life of a minority culture."[21]

A clear instance of cultural pluralism can be shown by comparing traditional "Anglo" values and traditional "Mexican-American" values:

ANGLO	MEXICAN-AMERICAN
—seeks mastery over nature	—seeks subjection to nature; acceptance of "God's will"
—aspires to climb the "ladder of success"	—more content with the present; may wish to "follow in father's footsteps"
—success is gained by hard work	—work to satisfy present need; present-time orientation
—save "for a rainy day"	—share with the extended family
—adhere rigidly to time schedule	—adherence to time is less important; "manana"
—change is normal in itself	—old ways may be followed with confidence
—there is a scientific explanation for everything	—witches, fears and non-scientific medical practices are common explanations of behavior

ANGLO	MEXICAN-AMERICAN
—competition, aggression, are valued; one competes to win	—humility is prized; acceptance of status quo is common
—individuality is valued highly	—obedience is prized—the Church, family, etc.

While this list[22] indicates sharp clashes in a number of cultural variables, the rationales (which are explained more completely later in this paper) add to the impact and consequences of understanding these cultural norms and differing expectations.

Cultural borrowing occurs frequently in any cultural group which is aware of other cultures. Linton dramatizes the concept of cultural borrowing, noting that the "American culture" consists of a number of values and items which have been permanently "borrowed," so that a typical American businessman might start his day when he:

> places upon his head a molded piece of felt invented by the nomads of Eastern Asia and if it looks like rain, puts on outer shoes of rubber, discovered by the ancient Mexicans, and takes an umbrella, invented in India. He then sprints for the train—the train, not the sprinting, being an English invention. At the station he pauses for a moment to buy a newspaper, paying for it with coins invented in ancient Lydia. Once on board he settles back to inhale the fumes of a cigarette invented in Mexico, or a cigar invented in Brazil. . . . As he scans the latest editorial pointing out the dire results to our institutions of accepting foreign ideas, he will not fail to thank a Hebrew God in an Indo-European language that he is one-hundred percent (decimal system invented by the Greeks) American (from Americus Vespucius, Italian geographer).[23]

Cultural borrowing is enhanced and facilitated by mass communication and technology, by
by governmental and social interaction, and by educational exchange programs. Some even argue that a "world culture" is developing;[24] there is some evidence to support this view.

Although most communication experts emphasize the importance of non-verbal cues to the process of communication, many non-verbal cues accompany verbal messages and may be inseparable from them. Much communication between members of different racial and ethnic groups in America is nonverbal. Arthur Smith notes that in slavery-times, slaves communicated to each other through songs which the slaveowners could not understand. For example, the song "Follow the Drinkin' Gourd" referred to the Big Dipper; if an escaped slave followed this constellation at night, he would be going North toward freedom.[25] With contemporary Black/White racial conflicts, Blacks still communicate with each other in verbal and non-verbal codes which most Whites do not

comprehend.[26] Andrea Rich emphasizes the nonverbal factor in interracial communication, noting that:

> Nonverbal communication is significant in interracial settings not only because of this physical separation of the races but also because . . . the lack of trust among the races has caused interracial communicators to reject the face values of verbal communication and to search for nonverbal cues as indicators of real meaning and response in interracial communication situations.[27]

Thus the "true self" may be revealed more readily through non-verbal expressions. Sapir notes the importance of nonverbal communication as early as 1927, noting that "we respond to gestures with an extreme alertness and, one might say, in accordance with an elaborate and secret code that is written nowhere, known by noone, and understood by all."[28] Jurgen Duesch agrees that nonverbal communication is the main force behind interracial communication:

> Nonverbal denotation is used as an international, intercultural, interracial and interspecies language; it is adapted to communication with an out-group. Verbal denotation is used as a culturally specific language; it is adapted to communication with the in-group.[29]

Mehrabian explains why an interculturally understood universal form of expression such as non-verbal communication can exist:

> How is it possible that, despite the absence of any explicitly accepted standards as to what certain behaviors mean, people are still able to understand each other's nonverbal communication? . . . To resolve this puzzle, we must remember that people rarely transmit nonverbally the kinds of complex information that they can convey with words. Nonverbal behavior primarily involves the communication of one's feelings and attitudes, and these are rather simply described.[30]

Interracially, lack of effective communication can be traced directly to the inability of individuals to escape the ethnocentrism phenomenon. Whitney Young, for example, suggests that effective communication between Black and White Americans never really existed:

> I don't think we really ever had communication; something cannot break down which never existed. Communication, if it's to be meaningful, exists between people who are peers, who have a mutual respect and who can communicate on other things than problems. What we've had has been a kind of noisemaking between white and Negro citizens where white people said what was to be done and Negroes agreed and acquiesced.[31]

Historian Lerone Bennett suggests that lack of effective communication resulted from the lack of a genuine <u>desire</u> to communicate,[32] while Killian and Grigg explain that White Americans have simply failed to attempt to understand or appreciate

the Black culture:

> Most white Americans, even those white leaders who attempt to communicate and cooperate with their Negro counterparts, do not see racial inequality in the same way that the Negro does. The white person, no matter how liberal he may be, exists in the cocoon of a white-dominated society. Living in a white residential area, sending his children to white schools, moving in exclusively white social circles, he must exert a special effort to expose himself to the actual conditions under which large numbers of Negroes live. Even when such exposure occurs, his perception is likely to be superficial and distorted. The sub-standard house may be overshadowed in his eyes by the television aerial or the automobile outside the house. Even more important, he does not perceive the subjective inequalities inherent in the system of segregation because he does not experience them daily as a Negro does. Simply stated, the black American lives a large part of his life in a white world also, but in a world in which he is stigmatized.[33]

Economic and political comparative standards

Mexican-Americans constitute the second largest ethnic minority in the United States; Black Americans are the largest group. While most Americans are generally aware of the issues concerning large numbers of Black Americans, most Americans have limited awareness of Mexican-American concerns. There are approximately ten million "Mexican-Americans" in the United States, 90 per cent of whom reside in the five Southwestern states which once was part of the country of Mexico—California, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. The economic, social and educational levels of this population are shockingly low—typically, below levels for Black Americans.

Historically, the acquisition of Spanish-speaking citizens by the United States has resulted from military conquest. The Texas War of Independence, in 1836, the Mexican War of 1846-1848 and the Spanish-American War of 1898 left little or no choice to former Mexican and Spanish-speaking people but to accept U.S. citizenship. Under the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo which concluded the Mexican War, Mexico lost approximately one-half its total land area; today the five Southwestern states which contain most of the Mexican-American population once was Mexican territory. This area is frequently referred to by Mexican-Americans as "occupied America" or Northern Aztlan—an identification with the "old" country of Mexico. The United States government paid Mexico $15 million and assumed claims against Mexico by United States citizens amounting to an additional $3 million. Formerly-Mexican citizens had a

choice of "returning" to Mexico, their native land, or of retaining their land and property in a "new" country under a "foreign" judicial code. Somewhat reluctantly, United States citizens accepted this new and "different" people as part of the "price" for the massive land acquisition. The "price" paid by the new American "citizens" was massive prejudice, discrimination and segregation--the effects of which are still present today. Jorge Lara-Braud, director of the Hispanic Institute at the University of Texas, charges that:

> The powerlessness of the Mexican-American is not accidental. It is the direct result of a social system that penalizes difference and rewards conformity. To be blunt, the social, educational, economic, political and ecclesiastical structures of the state are rigidly Anglo-oriented and Anglo-controlled. This may look natural, but it is very dangerous. Under the present circumstances, a Mexican-American or the member of any other ethnic minority succeeds to the extent that he becomes or appears to be a replica of at least a middle-class Anglo Texan. Until that norm is met, one remains in the category of sub-people or non-people. This explains the frequency of such descriptive phrases as the "Mexican-American problem," "the Mexican-American's cultural gap," or the "Mexican-American's language barrier." The measuring rod implied lies outside the Mexican-American community itself. Instead, it is applied from outside, by the powerful dominant group.[34]

Not until the high fatality-rate of Mexican-Americans in World War II prompted formation of the American G.I. Forum and LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) did Mexican-Americans have a significant political voice. While both groups are considered to be politically moderate, they have served as vehicles for expression of numerous Mexican-American concerns and issues. Nationally-significant advances for Mexican-Americans did not occur until the Kennedy Administration, when several Mexican-Americans were appointed to federal offices. The Johnson Administration proclaimed LULAC Week, the first national official recognition accorded a Mexican-American organization; during the Kennedy and Johnson years, bilingual education became feasible.

Traditionally Mexican-Americans have supported the Democratic Party. In Texas, Chicanos founded their own political party--La Raza Unida--as a reaction to perceived lack of receptiveness of the state's Democratic Party. La Raza Unida succeeded in placing several Mexican-Americans on local school boards and city commissions in several localities; they also demonstrated that a political system

can be made to listen to a minority when minority voters work together.

It is important to note the interdependence of economic status with the educational and social status of Mexican-Americans. To obtain good paying jobs, one must have marketable skills which are sought by the American system; most Mexican-Americans do not have such training and background. Thus the Mexican-American economic levels are reflective of the educational structure. Social discrimination, stemming from an ethnocentric attitude, prevails despite legal sanctions guaranteeing equal opportunities. Due to misconceptions, inaccurate information and stereotypes, many Americans believe Mexican-Americans are naturally inferior and have no talents except cooking, bullfighting and/or drinking tequilla. Unfortunately, many Americans instill these attitudes in their children and, since there is a general lack of culturally-accurate information, the child may grow to maturity with these derogatory attitudes ingrained. The Chicano movement is slowly changing this situation, but it is a slow process; currently Mexican-Americans are economically discriminated against, which in turn denies adequate job opportunities.

The March 1976 Employment Status and major occupation group for the Spanish-origin population 16 years of age and older reveals that 14.0% of all Chicana women and 10.5% of all Chicano males were unemployed. 1975 income for Mexican-Americans 14 years of age and older reveal that Mexican-American males earned a median income of $6,450; 39% of males earned less than $5,000, while only 1.2% earned $25,000 or more. Chicana women's median income was $2,750; 75.2% earned less than $5,000, and only 0.1% earned $25,000 or more. By comparison, the average income for the American working male during this period was $12,400. Overall, one of every four Mexican-American families falls below the federal poverty level.

Mexican-American, Black American and Anglo Cultural Norms and Expectations

In analyzing specific cultural variables, more attention will be paid to Mexican-American variables for one pragmatic reason--most Americans know less about Mexican-Americans than about Black American and Anglo cultures. References

will be made to all three cultures where necessary to indicate significant differences.

The most obvious variable is that of language. Black Americans traditionally have spoken English; though perhaps a dialect, and often termed "sub-standard," the basic Black language is the same as the official national language. The fact that many Mexican-Americans use Spanish as a native language means that to succeed in the White, or "Anglo", world the Mexican-American must learn a "foreign" language and become bilingual. While many Black Americans have been denied opportunities because their language was considered to be "inadequate," denials to Mexican-Americans and totally closure of opportunities has been more flagrant. It must be noted that many Mexican-Americans do not speak Spanish at all, or do not speak the language fluently. It must also be noted that many Mexican-American parents have urged their children to master the English language as a survival technique. In South Texas especially, many youth had little experience with English until elementary school. Once in the classroom, the Spanish-speaking child was forbidden the use of Spanish to communicate, even in private conversations with other Spanish-speaking children. This inability to speak fluent English was used often to deny adequate educational opportunities, and frequently as a basis for assigning the child to "special" classes or classes for slow-learners. In earlier times, Spanish-Americans rather successfully suppressed most Indian languages, or exiled those Native Americans who could not be suppressed to specific and usually less-desirable geographic localities (e.g., "the mountains). Today, while a rather significant percentage of the population of Mexico does not speak Spanish as a native language, this is not true of those residents of the United States who are identified as "Mexican-Americans." The Anglo culture of the Southwest rather successfully suppressed Spanish as a vehicle for public affairs. In large areas of the Southwest, most notably South Texas, the dual language was used as an effective tool for denying students an adequate educational opportunity; thus person's whose first language was Spanish would be denied access into the economic mainstream unless they could compensate in extra-curricular educational

activities. Only by "becoming white" in socio-political attitudes and gaining "correct" English usage would the Mexican-American become accepted by the society-at-large; and this was not an absolute guarantee. Numerous poor whites in South Texas were also denied educational and economic opportunities because of these trends, since poor whites went through the same educational systems as "the Mexicans."

A second cultural variable is that of cultural history of the group. While the Black American's heritage was grossly distorted collectively by the experience of slavery—families were torn apart, Black and African cultures were largely eradicated and a new "American" Black culture imposed—the Mexican-American was not subjected to the same anti-societal factors. Mexican-Americans were suppressed and exploited in many ways, but they were not—except for Native Americans—subjected to legalized slavery. While the Spanish/Mexicans enslaved numerous groups of Native Americans, the contemporary Mexican-American cannot readily identify his ancestors as being former slaves. Thus a basic attitude of the ethnic group itself and of out-members toward the ethnic groups differs: there is a historic difference between the "conquered" in war (or "cheated" in the political sphere) Mexican-Americans as opposed to the Black American's identification of being descended from an "enslaved," or "kidnapped" or "captured" people.

From the first two cultural variables, language and cultural history, emerges a third cultural variable, that of biculturalism or multi-culturalism. The ancestral groups are significantly different between the Black American, Mexican-American and "Anglo" sub-cultures. In addition to tracing one's "roots" to different parts of the globe, the contemporary cultures available are sometimes different. Black Americans must typically function in an Anglo culture(s); most Blacks also function in a Black culture(s) as well, but socioeconomic survival typically dictates functioning in an Anglo culture(s). While some Mexican-Americans may be able to avoid most direct contact with the Anglo environment, this is very difficult to accomplish. In addition to functioning in an Anglo culture(s), Mexican-Americans typically share culture with other Mexican-Americans and may also participate in Mexican culture(s). Most Anglos are capable of avoiding most contact with Black

culture and Mexican-American culture if they choose to do so. While it may be difficult to avoid all contact with members of one or both ethnic groups, contact with an individual is not equivalent to functioning in that individual's culture. The multi-cultural aspect of the Mexican-American culture has given rise to the development and delineation of the "Chicano" culture, especially among young "Mexican-Americans." While many older and/or more "traditional" Mexican-Americans do not endorse or accept the term "Chicano" or the concepts which accompany the term, most young individuals of Mexican-American ancestry choose and insist upon being labelled Chicanos. To be a Chicano includes possession of the various cultures including Native American, Mexican and Mexican-American.

Both Chicanos and Blacks recognize the necessity of fully utilizing available educational opportunities. Greenberg raises the central issue of minority students and the importance of enhancing adequate educational opportunities, especially the difficulty of participating in an educational system which is dominantly Anglo-oriented:

> For minority students who continue in the system, they are simply taught to be what they are not. For those forced out, and the majority are, they never become educated and face a confinement-occupational life in the lower-standard job categories.[35]

The ultimate question, then, concerning treatment of minority students and cultural diversity becomes inextricably linked with the educational system as a whole:

> Are studies in one's ethnic culture to have the effect of centering on that culture, of deepening one's immersion in it, of plunging totally into the unlosable elements of ethnicity, or are these studies to be vehicles for safe passage? Are they separatist or assimilationist?[36]

As with many other minorities, especially Black Americans, representation of Mexican-American contributions to United States history and culture has been minimized. One recent high school graduate explains:

> From the time we first begin attending school, we hear about how great and wonderful our United States is, about our democratic American heritage, but little about our splendid and magnificent heritage and culture. What little we do know about Mexicans is how they mercilessly slaughtered the brave Texans at the Alamo, but we never hear about the child heroes of Mexico who courageously threw themselves from the heights of Chapultepec rather than allow themselves and their flag to be captured by the attacking Americans.[37]

A major factor in the new emphasis on education and other social changes within the Chicano ranks has been described as the concept of "Chicanismo," the recognition that Spanish-speaking and Spanish-surnamed citizens of the United States have common concerns with Spanish people around the world. Tomas Martinez explains:

> Chicanismo represents the denial, if not the antithesis, of the Protestant Ethic. Self-worth is not dependant upon external measures. It is the "inner" life that is most important in defining worth of self and others. Thus, a person may be quite poor materially, but nevertheless, his inner life may be psychologically very rewarding. Chicanos who have become aware of the discrepancy between materialism and spiritualism share the anguish expressed by Corky Gonzales in his epic poem, "I am Joaquin."[38]

The concept of Chicanismo also represents a fifth cultural variable, the difference of Chicanismo and identification of one who has "soul" in the Black culture. This quality of Chicanismo includes an emphasis on developing one's inner-self rather than concern with materialistic possessions and money. The Chicanismo concept has some similarities with the Black (and Anglo) emphasis upon "getting one's act together" and evaluating other people upon self-worth and character (especially as opposed to evaluations based upon skin color); but the Chicano culture has ingrained this quality within the fabric of the culture itself. Thus Chicanismo promotes an attitude of non-competitiveness as opposed to the competitions typical of Anglo and Black "ladders of success." Chicanos appreciate a generally-simpler lifestyle as a result. Within Chicanismo is a concept of "el grito," an attitude of social and personal approval of others. Black expressions such as "cool" and "superbad"--and the concept of "soul"--have similar connotations; but they are not identical. "El grito" is a personal part of the Chicano outlook on life, while "soul" may well be used for identification with the in-group (other Blacks). Linked with "el grito" is a more peace-loving nature and willingness to work "within the system" to abhieve changes. There is similarly strong evidence that most Blacks prefer working within the system also; it is probable that collectively Black Americans have experienced greater frustrations for a variety of reasons--including more direct competition with "the system," which is identifiable as "Anglo-controlled."

Both Blacks and Chicanos are family-oriented, and both typically participate in an extended family concept; an individual preference for considering the nuclear family as one's "family" is more acceptable—though not common—within the Black culture. Nuclear families are much more common among the general Anglo culture than within either Black or Chicano cultures. Within Chicano families, family events still occur at events such as weddings and la cinceneada or lantana. (Upon reaching her 15th birthday, the Mexican-American female is treated to a ceremony of dancing, feasting and general celebration called la cinceneada; the lantana celebration is equivalent to an Anglo "coming-out" party for debutantes.)

Among Mexican-American families especially, and to only a slightly lesser degree among Black families, women are still generally "protected" from outsiders. This "protection" often makes it much more difficult for a Chicana to become "liberated" in the sense of today's "women's liberation movement." There still is a strong tendency among both males and females to follow the "traditional" roles; that women are responsible for the home and men responsible for taking care of anything which occurs outside the home. Thus women who seek employment—especially in an occupation other than "traditional" housework—typically experience resistance from Chicano families. A portion of this attitude is tied to the concept of machismo—that a "real man" can take care of anything which affects the welfare of his family and earn an adequate living, as proof of his manhood. While this same attitude is not uncommon among Blacks (or Anglos, for that matter), the attitude is not typically found with the same frequency nor degree as within Chicano families. A variation within many Black families is a preference that women who must work do something other than domestic service, because of historic stigmas. In dating and marriage customs, a sexual double-standard may well apply. Sons are typically given greater latitude in choice of dates and mates and in freedom generally than daughters. Within both Chicano and Black cultures, inter-racial marriages are still discouraged. Within the Chicano culture especially inter-racial marriage with an Anglo is considered to be "bad"; marriage to a Black is considered to be much worse. However, it is not uncommon for "mitigating factors" such as the personal qualities of the out-group

individual, to cause the family to accept the inter-racial couple. Other factors may also include social status and/or economic status of the member of the out-group. The custom of daughters about-to-be-married taking a vow of chastity with the parents (vowing that they are virgin) is still common, but not as frequent as in previous eras. While chastity is still generally valued in both Black and Chicano cultures, some hold-over attitudes from the Spanish influence (and the Roman Catholic influence) are still strong in individual families. Inter-marriage or even dating between a Chicano and a bracero (Mexican laborer) typically is viewed as a social threat. Since the vast majority of braceros are men, Chicano families are typically worried that their daughter might return to Mexico and to a loss of socio-economic status and lifestyle. Thus inter-racial dating is sometimes preferred to having one's daughter date a bracero. The bracero is considered to be "Mexican," not Chicano.

Participation in the church and church-related activities varies between the cultures. While Christian churches have been important to both ethnic groups, there have been—and continue to be—significant differences. Most Chicanos have been affected by or are members of the Roman Catholic Church; most Black Americans are members of Protestant denominations (including the Baptist and Methodist churches). Actually going to church on a regular basis is more characteristic of middle- and upper-class Chicanos than for poor Chicanos; poor Chicanos may support the local church, but middle- and upper-class Chicanos tend to utilize church attendance more commonly as a social function. Within Black cultures, church attendance is probably more common among lower- and middle-income Blacks, although certainly large numbers of every socio-economic level attend church regularly, from both cultures.

Belief in supernatural happenings, both good and evil, are common among the Chicano culture. While supernatural occurrences are found within the Black culture, these usually are bad or evil happenings only. The currandero, or "healer" among the Chicano culture has no direct parallel within the Black culture.

The diet of both groups, the "ethnic foods", are representative of what most people of the Southwest and South respectively had available to them. Thus economic

factors (what one can afford to eat) and geographic location played large parts in determining what "Chicano food" and "soul food" were to be. Thus the taco, which is more an invention of the Southwestern United States than "Mexican," became identified as a standard "Mexican food." The margarita is readily available in "Mexican" bars and restaurants which are frequented by non-Chicanos and non-Mexicans; in Mexican bars and restaurants which do not cater to non-Mexican clientele, it may be difficult to obtain a margarita. (It is authentic, however, to identify common use of Tequilla as "Mexican.") "Black" foods such as grits and watermelon are common among all ethnic groups of the Southern United States (and elsewhere).

Dress habits also tend to reflect economic status and geographic location, rather than ethnic characteristics. Blacks tend to dress similarly to other persons in a given geographic region; only relatively recently have Black males especially adopted "wild" colors and fashions. Chicanos still frequently--though not typically--utilize such "ethnic" items as serapes and ponchos, especially among the lower-socio-economic groups. One unique fashion evolved from the Chicano communities--the pachuco. Pachucos were young males whose attitude was basically a rejection of society (both Chicano and Anglo); he typically slicked back his hair, turned up his collar, wore leather, shiny shoes with shoe taps, perhaps bandoleros, etc. A contemporary Anglo "pachuco" would be "The Fonz" of TVs "Happy Days" series. This fashion style of pachucos is rare today; more common today is the equivalent dress of an Anglo "hippie" of the 1960s--longer hair, denim clothes, shirt open to the waist, etc. The Black young male usually did not become as "different" in his fashion preferences; although some Black "dudes" adopted reputations for wild colors and "superbad" (or "cool") attire--such as orange shoes--the Black culture did not produce a parallel to the pachuco.

In sports preferences, Chicanos tend to favor baseball and soccer; Black Americans can be found participating actively in virtually all sports, but especially in basketball, football and baseball. Part of the difference in sports preferences may be geographic: soccer and baseball are common in Mexico; professional football and basketball began in the Eastern and Midwestern United States. Part of the

difference may be financial: college football and basketball (and baseball) scholarships have provided the avenue for numerous poor Blacks to "escape" the ghetto. Part of the difference for sports preference may be educational: professional football and basketball athletes typically spend four years in college before becoming eligible for professional sports; the American educational system has not been friendly to Chicanos (even less friendly than for Blacks). Part of the difference may be physiological: most Chicano males are shorter than Black counterparts, the very tall male and very large male is not as common.

Respect for the elderly is common to both cultures, as contrasted with the Anglo culture. Elderly Chicanos and Blacks are respected, almost revered, by younger family members; they typically are cared for (if necessary) by younger relatives, frequently in the home of an adult offspring. Attitudes of grandparents is almost patriarchial toward grandchildren. While all these attitudes are common in the Anglo family structures, they are common enough to be anticipated among Black and Chicano families.

The Chicano community typically refers to its community as the barrio, or neighborhood. The barrio is not considered to be a negative concept, as is the term "ghetto." Although the two words mean approximately the same thing on the denotative level, attitudes of residents toward them are significantly different. It is less common for a Chicano to attempt to "escape" from the barrio; in fact, barrios typically have names agreed upon by residents. Ghetto names tend to follow street designations, location of a major building, or subdivision or suburb label.

Drug use, at least in South Texas, tends to be readily identifiable. While Chicanos, Blacks and Anglos have been found using most known types of drugs, cocaine tends to be unusually high among young Blacks; marijuana and peyote tend to be unusually high among Chicano drug users; marijuana and "chemicals" tend to be higher among Anglo drug abusers. Again, geographic location may be more than co-incidental.

"Viva Mexico" is a cultural expression of identification with Mexico and the

Mexican heritage, but usually does not include a nationalistic sentiment for the country of Mexico; with Black Americans, Africa has become very important culturally (even before the success of Roots) for identification with cultural history. As many Black Americans had difficulty identifying with a specific geographic location (country), the continent itself has become a collective cultural reference.

Musical tastes are different and readily identifiable, especially among the youth. Chicano music typically includes Mariachis, boleros, polkas; the use of stringed instruments such as the violin and guitar is predominant, with less emphasis on percussion; other instruments might include saxophones and trumpets. Black music, or "soul music," is akin to jazz; has generally heavy percussion instrumentation, especially drums and/or piano. Chicano music has definite characteristics of Spanish music; "soul" music has definite characteristics displayed by several varieties of African music.

Major celebrations among Chicanos are Cinco de Mayo (May 5th) and Diez y siez de Septiembre (September 16th). May 5th is the day of the founding of the independent republic of Mexico; September 16th is the day of independence from European domination. The closest to a national Black day of celebration probably is the growing practice of celebrating June 17th, especially in the Deep South (day of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, although it was not "official" until January 1st, 1863) and January 15th, Martin Luther King's birthday. Other festival-related customs include botanas in Chicano bars (comparable to the "free lunch" which formerly was available in several Anglo bars) and the use of the pinata for celebrations such as Christmas and birthdays. There are other customs which are culturally-based (such as Chicanos making tamales for Christmas), but these tend to be more custom than culture-based.

A final significant cultural difference is in types of possessions. Young Chicanos still tend to choose cars on the basis of its speed; while speed is also important to young Black males, they tend to choose cars more for looks and luxury. With older, more family-oriented Chicanos, modesty tends to dictate possession of a smaller more compact car—even if the individual can afford a big car. A "big"

or "expensive" car purchased by a Chicano would usually be considered an attempt to "act Anglo"; with older and more family-oriented Blacks, possession of bigger cars (such as Cadillacs and Lincoln Continentals) is a positive sign of affluence. Chicanos with families who do not want to purchase a "big" car such as a station wagon (or who cannot afford to do so) frequently purchase a pick-up truck as a "family car." The same choice differential applied with houses: Chicanos tend to purchase more modest homes, even if the family can "afford" a larger home; larger homes, as larger cars, are more typical among Black Americans who can afford them.

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